

15. If the land escaped taxation for fifteen years would not it cost the State more than it was worth if afterwards it was proposed that the timber should be cut and the land sold to preserve the interests of the community?—It should be done by an Act of Parliament providing that the owner should not sell for a certain number of years after the place was proclaimed a sanctuary. The question wants a lot of consideration, I admit.

GEORGE PERCIVAL NEWTON sworn and examined. (No. 88.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are the Assistant Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs?—Yes.

2. Can you form any estimate as to what proportion of the licenses issued for deer-stalking are taken out by people residing out of this country?—No, but I could write to the acclimatization societies and ask them for the information.

3. I suppose you are from your position conversant with the complaints from time to time made with regard to the damage done by deer?—Yes.

4. Do those complaints refer chiefly to the artificial plantations and orchards?—Probably, but not altogether. We have had one or two complaints from the Lands Department as to damage done in their State nurseries at Hanmer.

5. I have here some photos showing damage done by deer barking the trees. Would you consider if they were doing damage to that extent in a climatic reserve the value of such reserve would be very seriously minimized?—After seeing these photos I would certainly consider its value would be detrimentally affected. At the same time I do not quite see if the reserve affected is one set apart under the Scenery Preservation Act or the Animals Protection Act how the difficulty is going to be got over as to allowing deer to be shot in that reserve.

6. I appreciate your point, because I understand that firearms are not allowed to be used in these reserves?—Yes; it would necessitate an amendment of the law.

7. *Dr. Cockayne.*] You can shoot in a climatic reserve?—Yes, but not in a scenic reserve under the Animals Protection Act.

8. *Mr. Lethbridge.*] Cannot settlers get permission to shoot where deer are doing damage?—There is a provision in the Animals Protection Act that where animals and birds are doing damage to property the Minister has power to grant authority to destroy such animals or birds then on such property. That is granted on the application of the person concerned. Of course, such sanction would not be given without other inquiries being made. One way is to ask the local acclimatization society to supply the Department with any remarks they desire to make regarding the application. If the evidence in favour of the request is sufficient the Minister almost invariably grants the necessary permission to shoot. I do not know of any case where damage is proved that the permission has not been granted.

9. *Mr. Murdoch.*] For a limited period?—As a rule, three months; but if the damage still continues people can apply for an extension.

10. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Can the Minister now send a man into a scenic reserve to shoot wild cattle?—I doubt it, because under the Scenery Preservation Act I do not think you can take a gun on those reserves.

11. Then it would mean an amendment of the Act in that direction?—Yes. That leads up to the question I heard Mr. Tripp asked, if it would be possible to have the deer confined to certain fixed areas, and if they went outside those areas they could be shot by any one at any time. In connection with that question I might say it would be a very good thing if such an arrangement were possible, but I do not see how it could be arranged, as one of the difficulties would be in the event of a person being found in possession of a deer of his being able to prove where he got it from. It is difficult to see how the matter could be equitably managed without destroying the whole sport. Then, unscrupulous people might send some dogs into a reserve for deer, where they cannot be shot, turn them out of the preserve and then slaughter them indiscriminately just outside the border. The question has become rather an acute one, especially at Rongahere, near Tapanui, where the deer have done a great deal of damage, and where a number of permits have been given to shoot. The acclimatization society were asked to try a bird-scarifier, which it was considered would frighten the deer away, and they proposed to experiment with it. There is no doubt that the whole question, in some of those places where the trouble is acute, must come up for consideration as to the removal of the protection altogether.

12. *Dr. Cockayne.*] That would be equivalent to having no deer-parks or sanctuaries in those districts?—Yes. If you remove the protection off deer in any acclimatization district any one can shoot there.

13. The whole of the Southern Alps will in time be one huge deer-park, and as the deer become a nuisance permission may have to be given to shoot them in a district adjoining a non-shooting area. Would that give rise to a difficulty?—Yes. You are quite right; that is one of the difficulties we have to deal with. With the knowledge we have, and with the wish there is to preserve both the native flora and fauna, there must necessarily be numbers of sanctuaries, and if those sanctuaries were places where no one could go with a gun because of the native birds, but there were deer there, then it means if you want to destroy the deer that the birds also might go. At present the birds are protected in their sanctuaries.

14. But the sanctuary is also for the plants as well as the birds, and if deer are allowed in, such plants as the ribbonwood would be wiped out. Would that be a wise thing to allow?—No, but the thought was only passing through my mind as to the best way to restrict deer within certain areas without their being a nuisance, and I cannot quite see how it can be done. All the power given under the law at present is to destroy them on property when it is found they are committing damage to such property. You cannot drive them off that property and destroy them somewhere else.